

Notes

Nomenclatural changes in *Spermacoce* L. (Rubiaceae)

Since the genus *Borreria* G. Meyer was segregated from *Spermacoce* L., authors worldwide have variously accepted or disregarded the split. The only reliable character by which the genera may be distinguished is the mode of dehiscence of the fruit. Specimens with flowers only are impossible to refer to either genus with any certainty. This problem was discussed at some length by Verdcourt (1975) in justifying reuniting the genera in his treatment of these plants in the African flora.

Early workers on the Australian flora (Mueller 1863; Bentham 1867; Bailey 1900) recognised only *Spermacoce*. The majority of the currently recognised Australian species were described at this time. Later authors (Schumann 189; Valetton 1911; Merrill & Perry 1945; Specht 1958; Chippendale 1960) who accepted Meyer's genus described a number of new species and made combinations for many *Spermacoce* taxa under *Borreria*. Others (Domin 1929; Fosberg 1988) persisted in recognising only *Spermacoce*. The result of this is that most Australian species have validly published names irrespective of which concept of the two genera is accepted. Verdcourt's conservative and highly practical view of recognising only *Spermacoce* has been adopted by recent Australian authors (Fosberg 1988; Wheeler 1992). Pending a critical review of these genera in Australia, this view has considerable merit. New combinations are therefore provided here for the only two named Australian species lacking valid names under *Spermacoce*.

***Spermacoce gilliesiae* (Specht) J. Clarkson, comb. nov.**

Borreria gilliesae Specht, Records of the American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land 3: 304 (1958). **Type:**

Australia, Northern Territory, Hemple Bay, Groote Eylandt, *R.L. Specht* 423 (holo: BRI!).

The termination of the epithet is corrected here in line with Article 32.5 of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature (Greuter *et al.* 1988). Specht named the plant for his wife Marion A. Gillies (Specht pers. comm.).

***Spermacoce omissa* J. Clarkson nom. nov.**

Spermacoce suffruticosa R. Br. ex Benth., Flora Australiensis 3: 443 (1867), nom. illeg., non *S. suffruticosa* Loefl. (1758) nec *S. suffruticosa* Hill (1764) nec *S. suffruticosa* Sprengel (1824). *Borreria suffruticosa* Specht, Records of the American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land 3: 473 (1958). **Type:** Australia, islands of the Gulf of Carpentaria, *R. Brown* sn (isosyn: MEL!).

Bentham's name is illegitimate being a later homonym of *S. suffruticosa* Loefl. Specht adopted Bentham's epithet in publishing a name for the plant under *Borreria*, which, under Article 72.2 of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature is taken to be a new name. The epithet *omissa*, from the Latin *omissus* meaning neglected or disregarded, is a reference to this species lacking a valid name in *Spermacoce* for well over a century.

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